



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
November 10, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

Due to the COVID-19 health pandemic, the Long Lake City Council attended the meeting telephonically pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.021.

Present: Mayor: Charlie Miner; Council: Tom Skjaret, Jahn Dyvik, Michelle Jerde, and Deirdre Kvale

Staff Present: City Administrator: Scott Weske (in person); and Fire Chief: James Van Eyll (telephonically)

Absent: None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Skjaret, seconded by Dyvik, to approve the agenda as presented. Ayes: all by roll call.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE

No one was in attendance to address the City Council during Open Correspondence.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Discussion of City Council, Planning Commission, and Employee Compensation/Employee Benefits

City Administrator Weske recalled that back in February of 2020 it was decided that the City should take a look at salary rates for Council and Planning Commission members, as well as to review employee compensation and benefits. He explained that most staff members have been with the City so long that the step system is no longer in play and there has just been a sliding scale that has been used for annual raises. He reported that those raises have been between 0% and 3%. He reported that he had put together some comparables and utilized LMC wage survey data that looked at the surrounding cities and took into account various sample sizes. He noted that most of staff is below market rate for the area and he introduced the possibility of doing a one-time pay adjustment.

Council member Kvale asked about the driving force behind a stipend for the Planning Commissioners. She recognized that they devote a lot of time to serving on the Planning Commission and asked if they had made a request for compensation.

Weske agreed that the Planning Commission works hard but noted that they have never asked for compensation from the City.

The Council discussed increasing the stipend slightly for the Planning Commission Chair, and only paying the stipend if there was a meeting and if they attended that meeting. The Council asked to discuss the other salary and compensation items before final decisions were made.

The Council discussed market rate for the area and for the size of the City and gave consideration to various avenues to increase pay.

Council member Kvale stated that she would like to see some performance measures included in City compensation rather than a lock-step approach.

Council and staff discussed the Council past practices for pay raises for employees; the importance of staying competitive in the job market so there is stronger employee retention; noted that there is already a 3% increase budgeted for 2021; and discussed the difficulty of doing merit-based raises as a government entity and with the small number of staff.

Council member Skjaret suggested giving staff the 3% increase as budgeted, and then also 50% of the proposed market rate increase. He added that the City may also need to limit the number of allowed accrued vacation days.

Council member Kvale asked if the vacation days and sick days policies were written down.

City Administrator Weske confirmed that this information is documented in the employee handbook.

Mayor Miner suggested the City may want to look at some sort of buy-out program for the accrued vacation. He stated that he likes the suggestion made by Council member Skjaret to move forward with an additional 50% of the proposed amount as a raise, and the remainder the following year to spread out the costs.

Council member Kvale questioned the wisdom of the City budgeting \$41,000 for pay increases.

Council member Skjaret stated that as an employer, the City wants to protect its assets which are its employees, even in an economic downturn. He shared examples of past economic downturns and the employee turnover that it caused.

There was a consensus of the Council to consider moving forward with a \$100/meeting stipend for the Planning Commission; consider a slightly higher stipend for the Planning Commission Chair; give the budgeted 3% raise to employees; and consider an additional raise of 50% of the proposed increases for 2021.

City Administrator Weske stated that he will put those figures into the budget and bring it to an upcoming meeting, so they can see what the actual numbers will look like before a final decision is made.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURN

Hearing no objection, Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting by general consent at 6:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Weske
City Administrator